

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The flora of Mt. Desert.

THE FLORA of Mount Desert has for some years been the object of careful study, and the result has now appeared in a very handsome volume.² An outline of the geology of the island is furnished by Professor W. M. Davis of Harvard. The summary shows 751 phanerogams, 47 pteridophytes, 271 bryophytes, and 421 thallophytes excluding fungi and myxomycetes, which have not been collected. A carefully prepared introduction gives a general description of Mt. Desert and its flora. Some of the noteworthy features are the arctic character of the flora, the very small representation of introduced foreign plants, the scanty showing of Leguminosæ, the entire absence of *Asclepias*, *Gentiana*, and other well known genera, and the remarkable beauty and deepness of coloration.

The introduction also contains a somewhat extended discussion of nomenclature, brought on by the recent attempts of American botanists towards stability. In the list the nomenclature of the last edition of Gray's Manual is followed, a principle which the GAZETTE has always strongly advocated for local lists. In the discussion of what is known as the "Rochester Code," however, the argument is weakened by the frequent imputation of unscientific motives to those concerned in framing the code. We believe in difference of opinion and a strong expression of it, in fact there was an abundance of this among those who by mutual concession framed the code, but we do not see that any position is strengthened by calling those who oppose it names. We could wish that the strictures, which are good enough in their way, had been pruned of the gratuitous assumption of motives which we know do not exist. When the botanists who were at Rochester learn that "less than one day was sufficient for this committee" (on nomenclature) they will be somewhat surprised, for they were not aware that any point was considered that had not been under discussion for years. The mistakes made were certainly only those of judgment and not of intention. Of course there was no thought that the code would be binding except upon those who chose to follow it, but it was believed that the best interests of American botany would be subserved by coming to some agreement concerning nomenclature.

²RAND, EDWARD L. and REDFIELD, JOHN H.—A preliminary catalogue of the plants growing on Mt. Desert and the adjacent islands. With a map. 8vo. pp. 286. Cambridge: University Press. 1894.

Minor Notices.

ANOTHER practical botany¹ has been added to the list of laboratory guides, this time for beginners. Professor Bower has really given us an abridgement of his "Course of Practical Instruction in Botany," so that its spirit and method is familiar. The book can be of excellent service in our secondary schools, and even in the elementary courses of most colleges, provided, always, that it is in the hands of a competent teacher, and this any book demands. The information as to methods of preparation, and the introductory exercises on the structure of the vegetable cell, and the common micro-chemical reactions, are very helpful to the inexperienced teacher. As is known, the author begins with the highest types, an order of treatment which we do not consider scientific or necessary. There is no reason why the mucor of the last study should be any more difficult for a beginner to see and to understand than the tissues and ovule structures of the first types. The excellence of the work demanded, however, and the scientific spirit of it all, needs no comment.

THE PROCEEDINGS of the Madison Botanical Congress have recently been published by Secretary J. C. Arthur. The issue was much delayed by the dilatoriness of speakers and committeemen in revising manuscript and proof sheets. The report makes a handsomely printed pamphlet of sixty pages with an index by which all references to the matters discussed can easily be found. Copies may be obtained by application to Dr. J. C. Arthur, Lafayette, Indiana.

IN CONNECTION with the study of some recent collections, Mr. F. H. Knowlton² has given a review of the fossil flora of Alaska. An historical review, list of species, and discussion of beds are given. Of the 115 forms enumerated forty-six are peculiar to Alaska. The same author has published in *The Journal of Geology* (May-June, 1894) an instructive paper on "Fossil plants as an aid to geology."

A RECENT contribution³ from the Gray Herbarium contains descriptions of some twenty-five new Mexican plants, among them the beautiful new pine (*P. Lumholtzii*) with dense pendulous foliage recently figured in *Scribner's Magazine*.

¹BOWER, F. O.—Practical botany for beginners. pp. xi. 275. Macmillan & Co., London and New York, 1894. 90 cents.

²KNOWLTON, F. H.—A review of the fossil flora of Alaska, with descriptions of new species. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. 17: 207-240. pl. 1. 1894.

³ROBINSON, B. L. and FERNALD, M. L.—New plants collected by Messrs. C. V. Hartman and C. E. Lloyd upon an archæological expedition to north-western Mexico under the direction of Dr. Carl Lumholtz. Proc. Am. Acad. 30: 114-123. Aug. 27. 1894.